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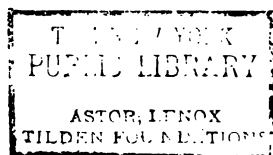






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THE HUMMING BIRD





P. LENTZ

THE HUMMING BIRD

BY
OWEN ROBINSON

ILLUSTRATED

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1913

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To
W. W. AULICK
MASTER OF THE GREAT AMERICAN EPIC

1915

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THE HUMMING BIRD

CHAPTER I

FINNEGAN IN THE GLUMS

YOUNG BRIAN DE BORU FINNEGAN CHRON- ICLES BASEBALL

THEY lay incongruously entwined, reveling on the greensward, making disparaging remarks on the candidates for the Kennedy baseball nine, who flung themselves to and fro in lumbering, unprofessional attempts to capture the cannonade of grounders and liners that Captain Glendenning delivered to them from home-plate.

The three on the coaching line were P. Lentz, the King of the Kennedy, whose two hundred and fifty-six pounds, though

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it had served the 'varsity football team in many a grueling battle, was somewhat unfitted by nature to gambol on the diamond; Rosebud Mason, whose hands were too delicate, and Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan, aged twelve, who, despite his complete and amazing theoretical knowledge of the game, was too small to be distinguished back of second base. And of the three only Finnegan grieved at the deprivation.

Now, the Kennedy aggregation was not one to be proud of, and on this particular afternoon they were not even living up to their own discouraged opinion of themselves. In consequence, Glendenning at the bat, the Gutter Pup at second, and P. Lentz and Finnegan in the observation row, were voluble in their comments. Only Rosebud, who did not wish to discourage Fatty Harris at third,—for

FINNEGAN IN THE GLUMS 5

whom he substituted,—remained discreetly silent.

“One out, man on third,” announced Glendenning.

The ball went ripping and twisting toward third, where Fatty Harris valorously stopped it with his chest, dove clumsily for it, and after a moment’s wild juggling seized it and threw to second. The rest sat down and roared.

“What’s the matter?” said Fatty Harris, rubbing his chest and looking foolish.

“Great brain,” said Glendenning.

“Magnificent! Wonderful!”

“Pretty quick thinking, that,” said the Gutter Pup seriously.

“Splendid!” said P. Lentz.

“You see,” continued the Gutter Pup mercilessly, “Fatty calculated that the man on third, the moment he fumbled the ball, would run back to second!”

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The Kennedy House cheered and hooted.

"You said 'man on first,'" said Harris stubbornly.

"'Third.'"

"I heard you say 'first,'" Harris insisted.

"Too bad. I beg your pardon. Pray excuse me. I probably do not speak distinctly. Try again. Man on third and first; one out. Where is the man, *Mr. Harris?*"

"On third and first."

"I congratulate you. How many out?"

"One."

"Wonderful! Are you quite ready, *Mr. Harris?*"

"Hang it, go on!" said Harris miserably.

But instead of knocking the ball to

FINNEGAN IN THE GLUMS 7

Harris, Glendenning sent it sizzling to short, where Lovely Mead, who had settled down to enjoy the further confusion of Harris, caught unawares, stood helplessly, ball in hand, trying to remember the directions.

The four guardians of the sacks sat down and pretended to weep. Glendenning, deeming it about time to orate, shouted:

“Come on, come on! Do something with it. Don’t stand there fondling it. Throw it away from you—it ain’t good to eat. Throw it to right field or over the backstop—anywhere. But throw it, throw it!”

The ball came bounding home.

“Great work! Fine! Bright boy, Lovely. You stop the man at first from scoring. Say, this team is a wonder. This is the finest bunch of vaudeville jug-

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glers ever gotten together. What are you—a lot of truck gardeners? Are we playing button, button, who's got the button?—or what?

The silence was respectful.

“Say, if this goes on, I tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to disband this bunch and organize the Kennedy croquet champions. Then we might beat some one. Now, once more. Repeat the play, and please, *please* remember there is such a thing as second base!”

Finnegan, pillowed on P. Lentz's leviathan back, was silent in disgust—which indeed was the only time silence descended on him.

“What do you think of it, Irish?” said P. Lentz with a grunt.

Finnegan refused to answer.

King Lentz looked at him and saw he was actually suffering.

"Suppose, young Irish, you think you ought to be there?"

Finnegan's fists closed spasmodically.

"Lord! Firecrackers," sang out King Lentz, "that bunch of yours is so rank even our gab factory here can't express himself."

The Tennessee Shad, who had once pitched an outcurve to the Gutter Pup in practice, came up with Jock Hasbrouck, the catcher, and fell languidly over the receptive King Lentz, who remarked sarcastically:

"How about that ancient outcurve they tell about?"

"I think I pitched another to-day," said the Shad, grinning.

King Lentz affected an immense surprise and looked at Jock Hasbrouck for confirmation.

"Straight ball," said Hasbrouck.

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"Why, Jock," said the Tennessee Shad sorrowfully, "it did curve."

"Down."

"Hush," said the Shad, laughing. "Think of the Woodhull. We must carefully spread the impression, sort of let it percolate, that I've got everything—outsweeps and inshoots and fancy drops, etcetera, etceteray. Am I right, young Irish?"

Finnegan still refused to comment.

"What's the matter with our rapid-fire talker?" said Jock Hasbrouck in surprise.

"He's taken it to heart," said King Lentz, stopping to gaze mournfully at the spectacle of the Waladoo Bird on first muffing a pop fly that was only trying to steal into his pocket. "Irish doesn't appreciate the humor of it."

"You're all right, Irish," said big Jock

FINNEGAN IN THE GLUMS 11

Hasbrouck, pulling his ear affectionately. "That's the proper fighting spirit. Still, Bub, we can't win every house championship. The Dickenson has it pinched."

"And the Woodhull?" said Finnegan abruptly.

At this mention of their appointed and malignant enemy a mournful silence fell.

"The Woodhull's bum enough," said the Rosebud feebly.

"As bum as that?" said Finnegan with a contemptuous jerk of his thumb.

There was no protest.

"After what happened last fall," said Finnegan tearfully, "we've got to beat the Woodhull; we've just got to."

"Well, young sporting authority," said P. Lentz, somewhat irritated, "what chunk of pearly wisdom have you to offer?"

Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan

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drew himself up to his full four-feet and gazed at them with scorn.

"Give *me* a chance at this nurse maids' union," he said, and turned on heel.

The Cause of All the Trouble

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSE OF ALL THE TROUBLE

Now, when Irish had referred to the Woodhull he had touched them on the raw. In the system of the school it naturally follows that certain houses become traditional rivals, but with the Kennedy and the Woodhull it was more serious. It had all begun with the annual football game in November. The consequent misunderstanding was slightly increased when the Woodhull, in a revengeful spirit, diverted a flock of geese into the Kennedy, and it was not at all alleviated when, in reciprocity, some martyr from the Kennedy caged a skunk and padlocked it to

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the exit of the Woodhull. A few minor occurrences helped to fan the feud to vendetta heat by the opening of the baseball season; but at the bottom the original difference of opinion went back to the now famous disputed game of football which is posted on the Kennedy records as: Kennedy 6, Woodhull 0; and on the Woodhull records: Woodhull 6, Kennedy 0 (forfeited). Several versions of the myth are now extant (the true story will some day be related), but all agree that the Tennessee Shad, quarterback on the Kennedy, was the originator of the trick. Two questions are still in debate: who won the game, and who smashed the ball? The Woodhull version lays the last to the Tennessee Shad and a sharpened nail; the other eleven variations allow proper credit to the Shad, but give to King Lentz and his two hundred and

THE CAUSE OF TROUBLE 17

fifty-six pounds the glory of the unparalleled achievement. (However that may be, the facts are these: At the beginning of the first half the Woodhull center fumbled the ball, P. Lentz hurled his two hundred and fifty-six pounds on the coveted pigskin, there was a report like a dynamite explosion, the Tennessee Shad wriggled into the mêlée, seized the flattened leather, concealed it under his jersey and innocently ambled across the goal line, while the entire Woodhull eleven were frantically grubbing for the ball.

Here the game ended and the theoretical discussion began. Jack Rabbit Lawson, the referee, when face to face with the awful dilemma which he was expected to decide, wisely scudded for the Upper after exclaiming: "I resign!"

The Woodhull claim, tersely put, was that a ball is "dead" when it becomes a

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dead ball. The Kennedys asserted that the play had not been stopped, that the rules make no mention of the case, and that, anyway, the Woodhulls would have done the same thing if they had had the chance—which last argument in the logic of boyhood is recognized as a clincher.

At any rate, the question has never been decided, Jack Rabbit Lawson having absolutely refused to commit himself. Each house posted a victory on its records, swore its freshmen on the altar of eternal hatred, and began at once to prepare for the contest in baseball.

The Landing of Finnegans



CHAPTER III

THE LANDING OF FINNEGAN

FINNEGAN knew baseball—he knew its theory and he knew its history. There prevails a popular error that boys do not study at boarding-school. Nothing could be more unjust. Finnegan studied the sporting almanacs, and his knowledge was thorough and minute. He knew the records of the major leagues from the days of the Baltimore Orioles and Pop Anson, and though he was a little weak on the Southern and Pacific Coast circuits it was not due to any negligence on his part, but to the present deplorable insufficiency of data.

At this period, when Snorky Green co-

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· verty aspired to the Presidency, Doc Macnooder to the control of Standard Oil, while the Tennessee Shad believed that the mantle of the late P. T. Barnum might not be misplaced on his shoulders, and the Gutter Pup—fed on certain popular novels—dreamed of donning a mask and boxing the holder of the heavyweight championship of the world, Irish's ambition was to play third base on the Pittsburghs.

It is true that, witnessing an extravaganza at an early age, he was first tempted to be an Amazon, and wheel and march in the gorgeous, stage-lit parades. But after things were explained to him he stifled this indiscretion and buried the secret in his heart, as one of the bitter delusions of youth.

Now, Finnegan was a character whom

LANDING OF FINNEGAN 23

the school esteemed because it had been unable to tame him, for a school, unlike a college, respects individuality.

To go no further back than the beginning, on the opening of the school year, as the veterans of the Kennedy were sprawled magnificently on the side lawn, inspecting the new arrivals with caustic, terrifying comments, a buggy deposited on the roadside an immense bag and a small specimen of skin and bones. The new arrival was still in knickerbockers, his necktie had crept up under one ear, his visored cap was slanted over the other, underneath were two very bright eyes, an immense mouth and a nose that pointed to the north star.

"He's under six inches!" said the Gutter Pup. "Some one throw him back in the pond."

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"He'll do to black shoes," said the Tennessee Shad, who had the languid Southern point of view.

Now, there are two moments in the life of a prep school-boy which are distinguished from all others: One is, when as a senior he feels older, wiser, bigger than all the rest of the world and the moment when he feels smaller, more foolish and more ridiculous than at any other time of his existence—that other moment when the carriage that has brought him deserts him, and he has to pass the gauntlet of thirty-odd older boys expressly gathered to make his arrival as uncomfortable as possible. Most newcomers hesitate a long moment and then go stumbling up the path with their eyes on their boots until halted by an imperious volley of questions:

"Stop there! What's your name?"

LANDING OF FINNEGAN 25

"Hi there, freshman! Take off your hat!"

"Give your name and what's your excuse for living!"

On the present occasion the diminutive new arrival only gave a tug or two at the telescope bag, straightened up with comical pertness, knocked further back the visored cap, surveyed the terrifying group of veterans and exclaimed in Gatling-gun fashion:

"Hi there, one of you lazy, long-legged, spindle-shanked, knock-kneed, bow-legged, good-for-nothing roustabouts, jump up there now and give me a hand with me luggage. Lively now, lively!"

The Gutter Pup looked at the Waladoo Bird, who looked at Firecrackers Glendenning, who looked at Lovely Mead, whose jaw dropped as he looked sorrow-

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fully at the Tennessee Shad. Then, with one accord they gazed in perplexity at the impertinent little urchin standing at perfect ease at the end of the walk. The situation was absolutely novel. There was no precedent to govern the case. Had the newcomer been full-sized the probabilities are that his feet would not have touched the ground before he found himself on the third floor back, on his own appointed bed, underneath a heaping pile of his solicitous house-mates reaching to the ceiling in what is known as a "pie" formation. But he wasn't full-sized; he was plainly, as the Gutter Pup expressed it, "under six inches," of the class which ought to arrive tearful and homesick. So the receiving committee frowned horribly and sat in stony perplexity.

"Hi there!" said the youngster, unabashed. "What's the matter with you?"

LANDING OF FINNEGAN 27

Is this a deaf and dumb asylum, or am I in Lawrenceville, John C. Green Foundation? Will some one kindly answer? Eh, what?"

"Come here," said the Waladoo Bird, as severe as the Roman himself.

"Come here yourself."

"Come here, you sawed-off, loud-mouthed freshman!" the Waladoo Bird replied in a concise roar.

"Coming, sir, coming at once," said the youngster, who arrived with a handspring, saluted and said roguishly: "Ah there, you sports!"

"Young suckling," said P. Lentz, "you're fresh."

"Why not? I'm young and tender."

"What's your name?"

"What's yours?"

"Freshman, *what's your name?*"

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"Are we telling our names?"

"What!"

"Oh, very well. I'll begin," said the youngster pleasantly. And before they could recover from their amazement he had executed a rapid double-shuffle, ending with a slap to either boot, and begun in singsong:

Wow, wow, wow; wow wow!

Oh, me father's name was Finnegan,

Me mother's name was Kate.

Me ninety-nine relations

To you I'll now relate.

Wow, wow, wow; wow wow!

There was Dan the son of Michael's

son,

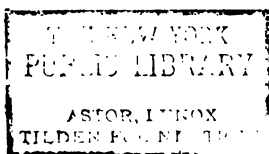
And O'Toole the son of Mat.

And every son had sixteen sons

Except the son of Pat.



“OH, ME FATHER’S NAME WAS FINNEGAN,
ME MOTHER’S NAME WAS KATE.”



LANDING OF FINNEGAN 29

Wow, wow, wow; wow wow!

Oh, every son had sixteen sons,

But some of them were girls.

And Maggie married Hoolehan,

And Peg refused three earls.

"Stop!" shouted King Lentz fiercely,
in order to maintain his gravity.

The urchin stopped.

"What's wrong?"

"Did you hear me ask your name? Did
you?"

"That's the next verse," said the unabashed, and immediately started up again:

Wow, wow, wow; wow wow!

Now Dannie's sons were Flaherties,

And Michael's sons were Flynns,

But Patrick's son was a son of a gun,

And that's where I come in.

"Stop, you wild Irishman!" cried the
King again. "Your name's Finnegan?"

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"Cute little boy," said Finnegan, smiling.

"Is it?"

"On again, off again, back again, Finnegan."

"What's the rest of it?"

"Dennis de Brian de Boru."

King Lentz looked at Finnegan like a judge of the Inquisition, but the urchin's face remained seraphic.

"Well, Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan," said the Gutter Pup, coming to the aid of imperiled tradition, "we won't do a thing to you—oh, no! You're going to be put on an allowance right now, quick!"

"Me no savvy," said the irrepressible.

"We'll give you just fifty words a day and then we're going to hermetically seal you up."

"You are?" said Finnegan defiantly.

LANDING OF FINNEGAN 31

“You think you can bluff me, do you?—you candy dude, you hog-backed, pipe-legged, squint-eyed, stub-nosed, flop-eared——”

“Grab him,” said the Gutter Pup.

Finnegan left the ground with a jerk and landed in P. Lentz’s lap.

“Gag him,” continued the Gutter Pup.

Five minutes later Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan, gagged and manacled, was carefully leaned against the brick wall while the Gutter Pup sternly addressed him:

“Young Irish, you’ve got a lot to learn, a lot, but don’t let that worry you. Oh dear no! That’s what we’re here for. You are about the freshest green tomato that ever came down the pike, but we like ’em fresh; it gives us exercise, keeps our muscles in good condition. Now, you mark what I say to you: fifty words a day

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is your limit and then the gag for you. We'll see if this house is going to be turned into an echo parlor for you or any other sassy little squib from Squedunk."

The freckled features of Finnegan contracted violently, while the muscles of his jaw seemed to twitch over the inserted gag.

"Why, even the gag won't stop him," said the Tennessee Shad in admiration. "He's still talking."

Finnegan and Destiny

CHAPTER IV

FINNEGAN AND DESTINY

FOR a week the régime was rigidly enforced without seeming in the least to check the inexhaustible flow of language. Finally, the allowance was increased to five thousand, and, when it seemed that that liberal limit had been exceeded, King Lentz would raise one finger, after the manner of the London police, and say:

“P. Lentz would like a little silence from you, young Irish, or, . . .”

And as Finnegan had learned that royalty's decrees are a command he at once subsided, waiting martyr-like for permission to break out again into double adjectives.

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Gradually the urchin's absolute good humor and friendly offers won their way. He became a privileged character, and the Kennedy claimed him as a celebrity.

In the early days of Spring the real Finnegan blossomed with the violets. He brought out a cap which had once been worn by a member of the Baltimore Orioles, he encased his left hand in a fielder's glove (not an effeminate mit) and went daily to the baseball cage to advise Cap Kiefer with the baseball candidates.

When the diamond hardened and the pitchers could try their skill in the open, Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan took up his position behind the box and made critical comments undeterred by ribald jesting.

With the opening of the baseball season, having become an active member of the staff of The Lawrence, he was natu-

FINNEGAN AND DESTINY 37

rally assigned to cover the first game. He came back to the Kennedy all in a flutter.

"Why, young Irishman," said the Tennessee Shad, who observed him in surprise, "you seem dreadfully excited, all up on your toes, what can be the matter?"

"I've got my chance," said Dennis de Brian de Boru, glowing and yet with a certain solemnity.

"Explanations."

"I'm to write up the game."

"Oh, is that all?"

"All!" said Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan, with a pitying smile. "Wait—just wait!"

Now Finnegan in his revolutionary, irreverent, little soul had a definite idea of the way such contests should be clothed in literary raiment. All that afternoon and evening he shut himself up in his room and, prone on the floor, chin in hands, he

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roved through his voluminous collection of picturesque accounts of famous contests on the diamond. The more he read the more the prosy, narrow English of the classroom receded before the unbridled images and tropical eloquence, and the conviction grew that here was the only, the long-awaited, the genuine American Epic. Thus fired with poetic fervor he awaited the day that should enroll him among the great creative forces of English prose.

The game itself was an unusually commonplace one—six to one in favor of the home team against a scrub nine from Princeton.

Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan, with a note book that seemed as large as a blackboard, camped down near first base and sharpened a pencil with complete disdain of the jibes and witticisms that in-

FINNEGAN AND DESTINY 39

stantly saluted him from the banked school behind. They were creatures of the minute—his duty was to posterity.

When the game was over he gravely interviewed both captains, with special reference as to the effect of the foul strike rule on amateur batting, thanked them, shook hands and went straight to his room. After supper he took a brisk three turns of the Circle, peremptorily refusing all company and, ascending to his room again, sported the oak.

The next evening the future sporting editor of the *New York Sun*, still dissatisfied—as genius should be—with the inadequacy of his efforts, reluctantly trudged to the Upper and laid his copy before his chief—Socrates Smith.

Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan, boy, would have scorned to show either reverence or fear, Dennis de Brian de

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Boru Finnegan, artist, humble and aspiring to perfection, waited with sinking hopes.

"Please, Socrates," he said, at last alarmed by the protracted silence, "what do you think of it?"

Smith swayed back, cracked his chair, kicked it aside and went to another without his gaze leaving the copy.

"I say, how does it read?"

"I say, is it any good at all?"

"I say—I might do it over."

Smith finished the reading, looked up and noticed the apprehensive Finnegan for the first time.

"Well?" said Dennis all in a breath.

"I suppose you know Bingham's away, our beloved censor," said Smith dreamily.

"Yes—but——"

"They may expel me for publishing it," said Socrates solemnly, gazing at the

FINNEGAN AND DESTINY 41

manuscript. "They probably will expel me. But, by the great Horned Spoon, this goes in!"

As luck would have it Mr. Bingham, the senior English Master, to whom devolved the duty of a general supervision of the Lawrence and the Lit., was called away to make an address in New York, and that issue of the school paper went to publication unsuspected and unmolested.

**Finnegan and the Great
American Epic**



CHAPTER V
***FINNEGAN AND THE GREAT
AMERICAN EPIC***

The Lawrence usually is languidly circulated on a Saturday. On the present occasion twenty minutes after it was put on sale the faculty telephones were buzzing with excited inquiries, while Bingham, standing at his receiver, gazed in horror at a copy of The Lawrence and sought in a dazed way to explain to each rapidly succeeding inquirer just how it had happened. Meanwhile a crowd of delirious non-subscribers was storming The Lawrence editor and offering twenty-five cents each for the remaining copies of the following picturesque account,

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which Bingham still gazed at in classic horror:

SPINKED!

LAWRENCEVILLE SPANKS THE PIPPIN
ON THE NOSE!

LAWRENCEVILLE, 6; PRINCETON, 1

Barrett, the peerless one, the nifty ten-thousand-dollar beauty from Walla Walla, was in form—that's all. His delivery would have kept a cryptograph specialist figuring through the night. His outdrop had the Princeton scrub carving arabesques on the ozone in mad, frantic, muscle-racking lunges for the elusive horsehide. He had 'em digging trenches with his drops and climbing for cherries with his high ones. He had 'em reaching for the wide ones, like July tomcats sitting on the edge of a fountain and striking for goldfish.



A 'CROWD' OF DEFENDANTS AND ATTORNEYS IN THE COURT OF COMMONS

100-100000
PUB. 100-100000
ASAC, INBOX
TILD. 100-100000

THE AMERICAN EPIC 47

Ross, the scrub pitcher, was very much appreciated by our favorite sons. They bumped him for five ordinaries, soaked a couple of repeats, spanked a three-sacker and smeared the bun for one smoking, sizzling homer.

SCORE BY INNINGS

Smith, the first to lift the locust for the Jungle Puppies, pushed a hoist to Walader, who swallowed it without blinking. Hanson frisked the daisy-tops with a whistler that Hicks gobbled up and posted to Stevens. Branch stung a broiler that DeSoto stonewalled and wafted to first.

For Lawrenceville, Charlie DeSoto lounged until he drew four misfits, burgled the second story, and whisked to third when Hickey spilled a Texas leaguer to right. Walader jolted a fast bounder to second, which Hanson con-

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gealed to in time to slaughter Hickey at the midway, DeSoto sneaking up the home boulevard with the first brass ring. Butcher Stevens pushed a blue-domer to center. Hastings slapped a screamer over first and, when the footrace was over, Walader was carving his initials on the doormat and our Bill was dusting third. Billy Barnes held up two strikes and three balls to draw for fours, but got three of a kind instead. Hard luck, Bill!

SECOND INNING

Oberfield miscued twice and then shot a safe one over second pocket. Maguire was out in a floater to Hickey. Ross died in his tracks on three fractures, and Hickson chopped a playful one to DeSoto, who jabbed it into Oberfield, making the third demise.

Flash Condit worked out a pass. Cap

THE AMERICAN EPIC 49

Keefer, our cerise specialist, could do no better than a gentle winger to center, Barrett nicked one to the chicken coop, which Maguire annexed, while DeSoto raised a steeplechaser which scratched the nebulæ.

THIRD INNING

Our peerless one's assorted strikes continued as deceptive as the green spectacles the farmer put on the cow who wouldn't eat straw.

Wright was sent up for three murderous assaults, Rogers diverted one to the poultry yard, Cap Keefer hugged it, and Smith popped up to Walader.

Hickey refused to bite on a wild one and splashed a rippler over third. Walader expired to send him to Second Avenue with a slow chugger to third; Butcher Stevens caught a sweeper on the solar plexus and hammered it where the night-

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ingale warbles its plaintive lays. Hickey ambled home, and Butcher Stevens roosted on third. Billy Barnes went after a fade-away and died on a zephyr to the curve-box. Flash Condit received the courtesy of the house and toddled, but Keefer was slaughtered on a twister that beat him to first by the Ross-Smith route.

FOURTH INNING

Things looked as squally as an actors' boarding house when the invited guest takes two charlotte russes on the first pass. Hanson reached the initial hassock on a butterfinger specialty of Walader's, Branch dropped a hot one in left field, Maguire poached another on the same order, Hanson dusting the pan. Ross showed himself a cute little waiter and strolled as a deadhead, filling the bases. Hickson smote a broncho-bucker to

Hickey, who massacred it and nailed Branch to the rubber; Hickson bit the dust on Keefer's quick flip to first. Wright ended the suspense by boosting a ladybird to short.

At this point Mr. Bingham's self-possession completely deserted him. He fell into an easy chair, ran his lank fingers wildly through his hair and stared at The Lawrence in awe, amazement and consternation.

At this moment who should come in smiling but Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan in the flesh. A smile of perfect content was on the young revolutionist, while his right hand held proudly secure his next installment.

"Finnegan," said Bingham, waving The Lawrence toward him. "Did you—? Is this your work?"

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"Why, yes, sir," said Finnegan brightly. "How did you like it?"

Mr. Bingham slowly collected his wits, and his feelings turned from awe to admiration. What he wanted to say was: "Good Heavens, you extraordinary youngster, how did you ever concoct it?" But it is not always wise for a master to say what he thinks. There was the English of Spenser and Addison to be protected. So he simply stared.

"It was a bit rough, sir," said Finnegan apologetically, "but I've done better with this. I think it will please you."

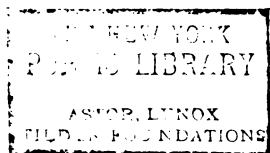
"You have done another, Finnegan?"

"Why, yes, sir—yesterday's game. Would you like to hear it, sir?"

The expounder of the Elizabethan line drew his hand across his forehead, steadied himself and said: "You may begin, Finnegan."



“IT WAS A BIT ROUGH, SIR, BUT I’VE DONE BETTER



Finnegan curled up on the sofa, flattened his manuscript over his knee, gazed at it fondly a moment and began as preface:

"I thought I'd tell the story by in-ings, sir. It makes it more dramatic, I think, than to give a résumé first."

"Is that a criticism on modern journalism, Finnegan?"

"Well, sir," said Finnegan with unusual modesty, "I think this is an improvement. It holds you in suspense—gives you the feeling of being there, you know."

"Go on, Finnegan."

"'Lawrenceville, 5; Pennington, 4,'" said Finnegan. "'In the breakaway Tyrell, the first to dust the rubber for the Chaperons——'"

"Chaperons?" said Bingham, puzzled.

"It's co-ed, you know, sir. 'Chaper-

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ons' gives rather a touch of humor, don't you think?"

"I see."

"In the breakaway Tyrell, the first to dust the rubber for the Chaperons, selected a hole in the circumambient and poked a buzzer over short . . ."

"Go slow, Finnegan."

"Yes, sir—'Minds soaked a clover-kisser to the far station, which Walader kitted to and whipped to first. . . .'"

"I don't get that, Finnegan."

"What is it, sir?"

"Well, the whole episode is a trifle hazy. What is a clover-kisser?"

"Why, a daisy scorcher, sir."

"You mean a grounder?"

"A certain kind of grounder, sir, very low—one that doesn't rise from the grass. Quite different from a broncho-buster or a dewdrop, sir."

"I'm afraid I have specialized too much in medieval English; what is this thing you call 'a broncho buster'?"

"A broncho buster is a grounder, a rather tobasco grounder, that bucks and kicks."

"Very lucid, Finnegan, and a 'dew-drop'?"

"Why, that's a weakling—a toddler—all luck, you know."

"Ah, yes. Now let me think, Walader stopped the daisy scorcher——"

"Clover-kisser, sir."

"Exactly. So Walader stopped it and retired the man at first?"

"Why, yes, sir."

"Proceed, Finnegan, proceed."

"Tyrell, who had purloined the second perch, started to ramble to Waladersburg when Jackson stung the planet DeSoto-wise for a safety, but our iridescent little

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body snatcher lassoed it and slaughtered the rally with a staccato lunge to the midway that completed the double demise.' "

" Ah yes, that is simpler," said the Master gravely. " Now for Lawrenceville."

" 'DeSoto streaked the empyrean blue with a white winger that was strangled in center.' "

" A fly, Finnegan? "

" Yes, sir."

" Just an ordinary fly? "

" Oh no, sir, a rather high one."

" Continue."

" 'Hickey ticked off a slow freight to the pretzel counter and cannon balled to first just ahead of Tyrell's slap.' "

" Let us go back."

" Why, what's wrong, sir? "

" Ticked off a slow freight? "

" Bunted a slow one."

" Naturally—but pretzel counter? "

"The curve box—the pitcher."

"Of course!"

"Stevens frisked the lozenge once to the back woods and then unmuzzled a humming bird to the prairies which nested in Jackson's twigs——"

"Repeat that."

"Stevens unmuzzled a humming bird which——"

"I don't like unmuzzled."

"I could say uncorked, sir."

"No, I don't fancy uncorked, either."

"Unhitched, then."

"Never unhitched. The fact is, the use of the words humming bird in this connection does not seem to me appropriate at all."

Finnegan looked very solemn and said with difficulty: "Please, sir, I would like to keep that expression, sir. I'm rather proud of that. A humming bird is a liner,

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you know, that hums. Please, sir, I hope you'll let me leave that in?"

"Finnegan" said Mr. Bingham with difficult gravity, "you may as well know the truth now. We have decided to adhere to the English of our fathers."

"I beg pardon."

"I mean that I shall have to edit your copy in future down to the comprehension of the most ignorant college graduate."

"Isn't the grammar right, sir?"

"The grammar is irreproachable."

"What are you going to do, sir?"

"I'm going to translate, Finnegan."

"Translate!"

"And you're going to help me, Finnegan," said Bingham, taking up paper and pencil. "From what I gather the first inning should begin like this: 'Tyrell

singled, Minds was out on a grounder to Walader, Tyrell, who had started for third, was caught off second on DeSoto's brilliant catch of Jackson's liner.' "

Finnegan sat silent, staring at his thumbs.

"Is that the way it's got to be done?" he said at last.

"I'm afraid so, Finnegan."

"You're not going to leave in the humming bird, sir?"

"I'm afraid not, Finnegan. 'Unmuzzled' or 'uncorked' or 'unchained' a 'humming bird' is daring, enthusiastic and undoubtedly expressive, but at the present moment the English Department of the Lawrenceville School does not feel strong enough to offer it to the nation."

"What are you going to do with it?" said Finnegan abruptly.

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"We'll say: 'Stevens' sizzling liner went straight into the mitt of——'"

"I won't sign it," said Finnegan hoarsely.

"No, Finnegan, you shall not be subjected to that humiliation."

"You won't let it stand, sir?" said Finnegan, with a last hope.

"No, Finnegan."

"Then I *resign!*" said Finnegan, walking out of the room with trembling lips.

The shock was terrific. Nobody could console him, not even the Tennessee Shad, who told him for his consolation how Keats and Shelley, English poets, had been cut off in the flower of youth by just such savage critics. For two whole days Irish remained dumb, to the great alarm of the entire house.

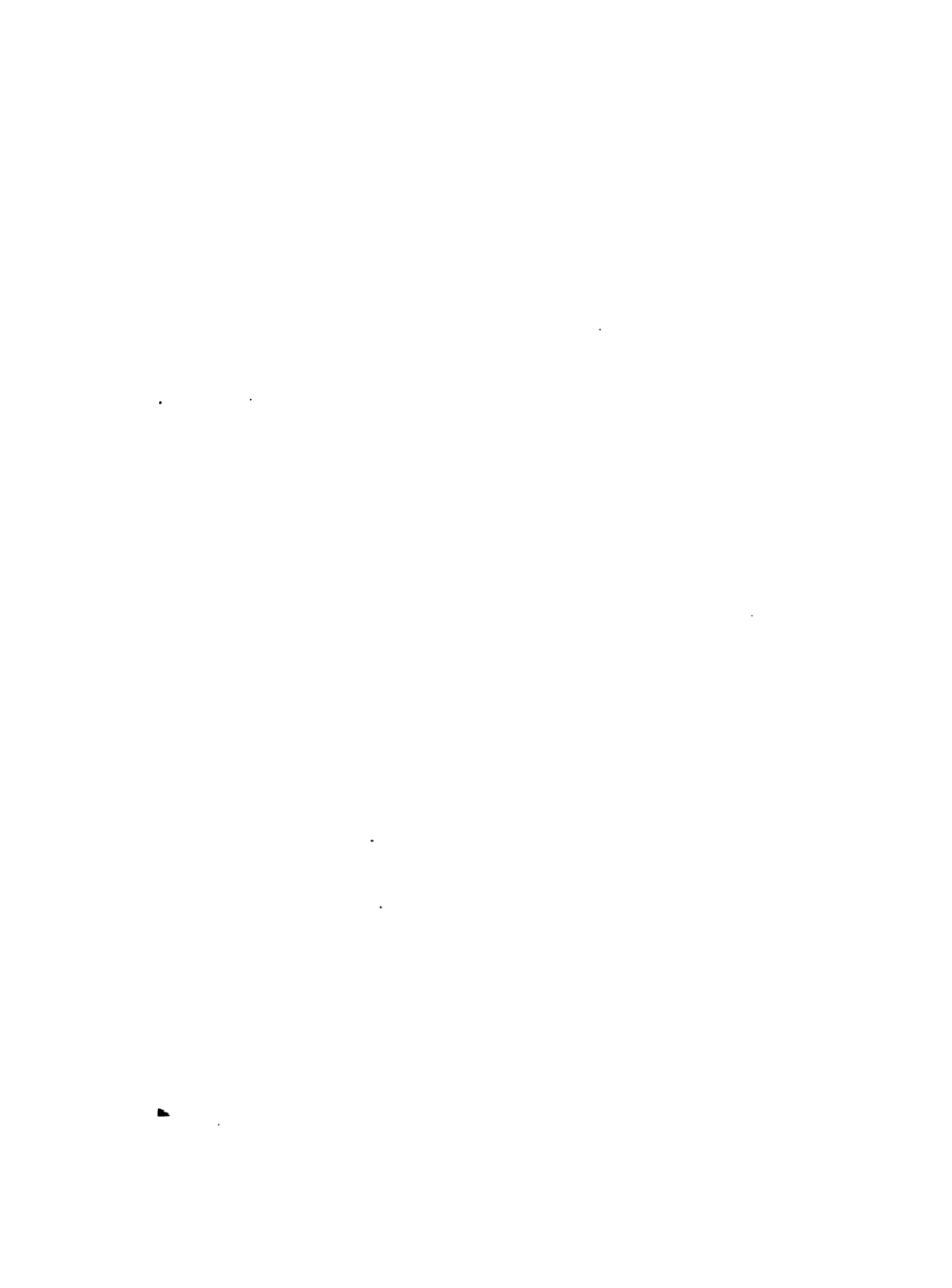
Then suddenly, as though nothing had happened, he turned up as voluble as ever.

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But if outwardly he seemed to have forgotten, inwardly he cherished a mighty scheme of revenge. The Woodhull must taste the bitter dregs of defeat—Bingham was the master of the Woodhull.



The Apotheosis of Finnegans



CHAPTER VI

THE APOTHEOSIS OF FINNE- GAN

WHEN finally the Woodhull and the Kennedy gathered for the fray there was but one plan of campaign in both camps—to rattle the enemy! Both teams had been outclassed in the house series, and no one cared particularly about the outcome—no one except the Woodhull and the Kennedy.

Each nine arrived in gang formation. The Woodhull camped down directly behind third base in combative attitudes, and the Kennedy occupied strong ground opposite, as close to first as the law allows. The Woodhull's fish-horn double octet

66 THE HUMMING BIRD

was led by Toots Cortell and his celebrated Confederate bugle. The Kennedys, more ambitious, had organized a symphony orchestra composed of two drums, several cowbells, a harmonica, one lonely flute and supporting horns.

As Fusser McCarty (cousin of Tough McCarty), pitcher for the Woodhull, stepped into the box and prepared to wind himself up for his famous gyroscope delivery, he was greeted by the following chant from the Kennedy minstrels, led by the vindictive Finnegan:

Oh McCarty is a pretty boy,

(So they say.)

*'And all the girls think Mac's just too
sweet for words.*

(I wonder why?)

*'Cause he parts his hair in the middle
and he has a lily cheek.*

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 67

(Oh, is that all?)

*Well, his ways are soft and pretty and
he has a coaxing smile.*

(Yes, but can he pitch?)

CHORUS:

*Look at the part in his hair,
Look at the rose in his cheek,
Look at his arm, his soft, white arm,
BUT watch for the yellow streak!*

Under these favorable circumstances McCarthy, with an appearance of extreme insouciance, hurled the ball over the back-stop.

Finnegan sprang up solemnly.

"Don't cheer, boys," he cried; "he's rattled!"

McCarthy shrugged his shoulders, deliberately calculated the height of the back-

68 THE HUMMING BIRD

stop and carefully pitched a drop that struck ten feet in front of home-plate.

Whereupon, Legs Brocket, who hated a pitched ball worse than a yellow-jacket, contemptuously reversed his bat, crossed his feet and assumed a bored, Apollo-Belvedere, waiting attitude.

The Glee Club sang:

*Good-by, McCarty, we're going to lose
you now.*

*Good-by, McCarty, you couldn't fan a
cow.*

*Good-by, McCarty, you certainly are a
pie.*

So, good-by, McCarty, good-by!

When the inning ended McCarty had given three bases on balls and allowed two hits, which had produced two runs.

The Tennessee Shad—who had once

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 69

pitched an outcurve—stepped confidently into the box. Snorky Green's bat, in trying to dodge a wild one, met the ball accidentally and knocked a grounder to Fatty Harris. It was an easy ball, what Finnegan called a foozled dewdrop, and under ordinary circumstances even Harris, who loathed the game, would have covered himself with glory. But right alongside the impressionable third baseman were camped the busy Woodhull rooters, and from the moment he had taken his position Harris had listened to the following:

“Don't cross your feet, Fat.”

“Look out, you're going to trip.”

“You're playing too close.”

“You'll get it in the smeller.”

“Fat, you'll get hurt!”

“It's awful rough ground.”

“There's a bump just behind you.”

70 THE HUMMING BIRD

"Don't listen to us."

"Keep your mind on the game!"

At this moment the ball from little Snorky's bat came gently bounding toward him. The chorus rose to a shriek:

"Run back!"

"Fall down!"

"Fumble it!"

"Juggle it!"

And Fat, in a buck fever, juggled it.

"Throw high!"

"Throw low!"

"Throw it wild!"

"Wild!"

"Hold it!"

Snorky Green, likewise frightened to death, reached first like a runaway rabbit, to find himself a hero. Instantly he turned, shifted his chewing gum to the other cheek, and spat on his hands.

"Aw, he's a cinch, Crazy," he cried

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 71

contemptuously to the next batter. "Soak out another beauty."

When the inning ended Finnegan was in glum despair. On five errors and no hits the Woodhull had duplicated the Kennedy's total.

In the second inning, due to the annoying delay in the appearance of the Tennessee Shad's famous outcurve, the score stood, Woodhull 5, Kennedy 3. By the middle of the eighth inning it stood, Woodhull 9, Kennedy 5.

The Tennessee Shad flung himself down beside Finnegan.

"It looks bad, Irish, doesn't it? he said.

"It looks awful, awful," said Finnegan brokenly.

"There's not enough moisture in the air," said the Tennessee Shad by way of explanation. "I think that's the trouble with that outcurve of mine."

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"The game's being thrown away," said Irish, devastating the turf in front of him. "You're all right; they only made ten hits off you."

The Tennessee Shad looked at him from under his eyelids.

"Sure, Shad, we're hitting McCarty just as hard. It's Fatty Harris at third is the trouble."

"You see yourself there, do you?"

"Fat has made six errors."

"You can't bat, Irish."

"I can work 'em for a base on balls; but that ain't it. Oh, Shad, just give me a chance on the coaching-line—just one inning, Shad!"

"Why, what would you do?"

"I'd have the whole blooming Woodhull bunch so woozy that they'd have to stop the game every five minutes to un-snarl their fingers."

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 73

"You know, Irish, that's a rather swift idea of yours," said the Tennessee Shad, impressed.

"Oh, Shad, will you ask Glendenning, will you? And, Shad, I've got even a better idea."

"Produce it."

"It's a shift formation."

"Say, do you think this is a game of feet ball?"

"No. Listen to me, Shad. What's the matter with us? It's second base, third and short, isn't it?"

"Well?"

"Our outfield is O. K., but it's the infield that loses the game. Now, we want to shift."

"Yes, and have every fly go for a home run."

"Not at all. There are only four fellows on the Woodhull can knock the ball

74 THE HUMMING BIRD

out of the diamond, and they're bunched at the head of the list, aren't they?"

"Sure!"

"Use two formations, Shad. Keep your outfield where it is for the good ones, and shift it for the dubs."

"My wonder, boy!" said the Tennessee Shad in admiration. "That idea will revolutionize house championships. You come with me."

And seizing Finnegan by the collar he swung him to his feet and carried him over to Glendenning.

Ten minutes later the sun burst into a new glory, for Finnegan, encased in a martial mitt, strode out magnificently to left field, rounded a hold in his glove with his fist, cocked his visored cap and proclaimed aloud:

"Hi, Shad—strike out these fuzzy carpet-beaters."

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 75

The new formation worked wonders with the astonished Woodhulls; for the first time in the game they ended their inning blanked.

"Now, Irish, you young dictionary," said the Tennessee Shad as the Kennedy frolicked in to bat, "we are all looking at you. We need four runs; go up to the coaching-line and make good!"

Finnegan disdained to boast. He marched like a gladiator to the coaching-box, stuck his arms and legs akimbo, cocked his freckled, star-pointed little nose, and began shrilly:

"Here I am, McCarty, here I am. Over here, right over here. That's it, this way!"

McCarty, surprised, committed the indiscretion of looking over.

"All right, Mac, it's me. It's Finnegan—Dennis de Brian de Boru Finnegan.

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He's right here, talking to you. But don't look! Keep your eyes on the plate! Don't look over! Don't look, don't. Hi yi, yi yi yi! Ball one! Don't mind me, Mac; don't listen to me. Try and keep your mind on the game. Hi! wild pitch! I'm not going to rattle you, Mac; no, siree; oh no! Whoopee! Up and down the Orinoco River, Timbuctoo and North and South Rome Centers. Hi yi, yi yi! Wow! Ball three! Good waiting, Fat; he's scared of you. Watch his eyes now! Watch his rolling eye. Base on balls as good as a hit. What, a strike? Never mind, Fat; I'm here. Finnegan's here. The next is a wide one. Look out now! look out, it's coming! It's—Whoopee! Kibosh! Walla Walla! Wow! Come right up to first, Fat. Thank you, Mister McCarty. I hope my little jocularly doesn't annoy you, Mac. Does it? 'Cause

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 77

if it does, will I stop it? Ask me. Say, McCarty, do I disturb you? Another ball? Why, Mac, I didn't say anything. Did I? Man on first, Mac. Don't forget that. Throw over now! Throw quick and wild! No? Too bad. Another ball? How sad! Always take mother's advice. Now, all together, on your toes! Spank the good ones, Lovely. On your toes! Here it comes. Ball three! Is it possible? Say, McCarty, I'm here; right over here. Don't forget me, Mac—Finnegan. You know Finnegan, don't you?

“Wow, wow, wow; wow, wow, wow!

Oh, me father's name was Finnegan,

Me mother's name was Kate.

Me ninety-nine relations

To you I'll now relate.”

While the embattled McCarty, abjured

78 THE HUMMING BIRD

by every one of his mates to keep cool, to hold his nerve, to steady down, strove to banish from his mind the pest on the coaching-line, Finnegan, with arms extended in whirling-dervish fashion, continued to rotate to the slogan of the Finnegans, while the assembled Kennedys periodically broke into the wolfish chorus:

“Wow, wow; wow, wow, wow!”

Now, there is something peculiarly irritating in the last interjection, irritating and insultingly exultant. McCarty was not conscious of being rattled, and yet he had passed two men on balls and was in a fair way to pass a third. He was a little distracted, that was all, by the shrill insect that kept piping:

“Here I am, McCarty! Right over here! Finnegan. It’s Finnegan. Just over here. This way.”

McCarty tried getting angry, frowning

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 79

horribly, gripping the ball and hurling it with vindictive energy. Then he tried to appear amused and succeeded worse. Finally, with a run in and the bases full, a consultation was held at the insistence of the entire Woodhull team. Instantly, the Kennedy Glee Club struck up:

*Look at the part in his hair,
Look at the rose on his cheek,
Look at his arm, his lily-white arm,
BUT watch for the yellow streak.*

*Watch for the yellow streak, boys,
McCarty never owned a curve.
Watch for the yellow streak, boys!
Watch for the dub who's lost his nerve.*

*He may be the ladies' darling, boys,
They like 'em soft and sleek;
But we'll get him in any old inning, boys,
FOR McCarty has a yellow streak.*

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Now, McCarty happened to be captain of the Woodhull nine, and so could not be ousted violently. He had, in fact, decided to retire in favor of some less impressionable member; but this song was too much for him. He angrily quelled the revolt and strolled back into the box. Besides, Dennis de Brian de Boru was at the bat, and he couldn't resist the opportunity to crush his tormentor.

When Finnegan took up a professional position in the batter's box the space permitted McCarty for strikes was exceedingly small. Likewise, Finnegan materially diminished the slender opportunity. In the first place, he pulled his trousers above the knees and anxiously drew the umpire's attention to their exact location. Then, with heels neatly together and his bat tucked under one ear in the fashion of the perennial Willie Keeler, he selected

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 81

the frontier edge of the batter's box and impudently declared:

"Give me a nice inshoot, you yellow man, and I'll soak her out."

But McCarty had evolved a crafty scheme for the humiliation of Finnegan. He stood still and with gentle underhand motion tossed the ball over the plate.

"Strike one!" cried Turkey Reiter, umpire.

"Aw, give me man's size!" said Finnegan angrily.

"Baby ones for baby boys," said McCarty, grinning.

He tossed a second strike amid the jeers of his supporters. But he tried it once too often. On the next ball the enraged Finnegan struck blindly, and to the amazement of all sent a safe hit over third, who was playing in. Two men scored, and Finnegan, triumphant, danced a

82 THE HUMMING BIRD

breakdown on second, cakewalked to third -
and came home turning cart wheels.
Meanwhile, the bases on balls succeeded
one another like cigars doled out at a
political picnic. And Finnegan, back on
the coaching line, piped forth:

“Back again, on the job again, here we
are again, Finnegan. Keep it up, Mc-
Carty, keep it up! No favoritism, every-
man a base on balls!

*“As we go round the mulberry bush,
The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush.”*

“Ball three! Thank you, Mr. Umpire.
Wonderful control, Fusser, wonderful
control—he hasn’t let a ball go over the
plate, not a ball!

*“Mother, may I go out to pitch?
Yes, my darling Fusser,
Chuck the ball around the lot
But don’t go near the batter.”*

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 83

"Four balls, well, well! Come right on up, Mr. Mead, you won't have any trouble finding the way home; don't run, we've got to do a lot of walking this evening. Hi! yi! Ypsylanti! Sockaroo! Walla walla, Wow!!! All right, McCarty, that's me, Finnegan. Does it annoy you, does it? Never mind, I'll stop. I'm going to stop right now, Fusser, right now. If you'll ask me. But ask me *po-litely*! I'm so sensitive! Tonawanda! Put 'em over!! Yi, yi, Whoopee, Hot Tomale, Ki-bosh, Ke, Zow, Zow!!!

"Another ball, you don't say so. Never mind, think of the record you are making, McCarty, think of that! Don't forget. I'll stop any time you ask me, any time, McCarty! Any time you ask me *po-litely*. What was that? I'm glad I don't annoy you, oh, I'm so glad! Are you getting ready to pitch again?

84 THE HUMMING BIRD

Wait a moment. Just one moment,
Squedunk, Raritan, Pocono, San José
and Sacramento! All hands around!
Swing your partners. Look out! Look
out! Yi, yi, yi, yi, yi! Thank you. Ball
two, take a chair, Shad, take a couch, take
a nap. I'll wake you when it's time to
come up. I say, Fusser, I say! This way!
you're all right, aren't you? Perfectly
cool? Good boy! Glee Club, a little
burst of melody. Are you ready? Go!

*“ ‘ Geel it's nice to be a fusser,
And to fuss the darling girls!
It's a cinch to be a fusser
And have them smooth your curls!*

BUT—

*Oh me! Oh my!
Ain't it awful when the fusser,
One, two, three! Um, di, doodle, di!
GETS FUSSED!!! ”*

APOTHEOSIS OF FINNEGAN 85

Whereupon McCarty retired and the
Glee Club, in mournful accents, sang his
demise:

*Will some one tell his mother
How poor McCarty died.
Will some one write his brother
Who stood there by his side.*

*He weakened in the second,
In the third he gasped for breath.
But the truth about McCarty is
He was simply scared to death!*

The Woodhull sent in four pitchers to
face the Kennedy batters and Dennis de
Brian de Boru Finnegan, and each fell
before the torrent of words. When the
inning ended ten runs had gone to the
credit of the Kennedy and the victory was
won.

A quarter of an hour later, as Finnegan

86 THE HUMMING BIRD

and the Tennessee Shad returned exultingly through the village, they met Mr. Bingham, of the Woodhull.

"Ah, Finnegan," said the master pleasantly, "game over?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good game?"

"Pretty good, sir."

"Close?"

"Not very close, sir."

"Who won?" said the master, forced at last to the demand direct.

And Finnegan answered proudly:

"I did."

Finnegan likewise wrote a classic account of the contest for private distribution. It began:

"The game was tucked away when Dennis unmuzzled a humming bird ——"

78
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